

RADIO

• SPRING 1975

HISTORIAN

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CARDS & LETTERS

Best of luck to you and I hope RADIO HISTORIAN will prosper and be a part of the OTR scene for many years.

Marvin Meyerhoffer
2525 Hermitage Way
Louisville, KY

Here's my check for RADIO HISTORIAN. I'm pleased to be a subscriber of your fine publication and I'll be looking forward to the next copies. I'm glad to know of your relationship with and affection for Charlie Ingersoll. Radio Dial will be missed, but your quarterly will surely help fill the void.

Don Koehneman
811 Bristol Avenue
Westchester, IL

Your first issue was very enjoyable. Keep up the good work. I have one suggestion: How about an article on filters? (For hum and surface noise).

Dick Stewart
4510 Weymouth Road
Medina, OH

Enjoyed your magazine very much. Read it from cover to cover. Keep up the good work.

Broadcast Billy
Bill Sturm
Box 72
Belpre, OH

I really enjoyed the first issue of RADIO HISTORIAN. Congratulations and I look forward to many more issues.

Ken Neal
Box 911
Washington, DC

Thank you for doing such a fine job on your first issue. Your article on grading/rating the shows is one of the best I have ever found.

Franklyn Belcour
121 Day Street
Auburndale, MA

Just a note of congratulations for the concept you are publishing in the form of RADIO HISTORIAN. You're building in some fine features which are sure to take hold. Your suggestions for creating a radio classification system is very worthwhile and represents a quantum jump beyond the G/VG etc. most of us now use.

Craig Smith
RR 1, Box 39AB
Orleans, MA

We will be eagerly looking forward to the next issue.

Al Meyer, WMSR Radio
10 Loretta Street
Hillsdale, NJ

Ed. note: (We appreciate the favorable response to our first issue. Thank you.)

Find the names of the soap operas from radio.

Amanda Of Honeymoon Hill	Just Plain Bill	Romance Of Helen
Backstage Wife	Life Can Be Beautiful	Trent
Big Sister	Lone Journey	Second Mrs Burton
Brighter Day	Lorenzo Jones	Secret Storm
Edge Of Night	Love Of Life	Stella Dallas
Forever Young	Ma Perkins	Story Of Mary Marlin
Front Page Farrell	Marriage For Two	This Is Nora Drake
Guiding Light	Our Gal Sunday	Valiant Lady
Hilltop House	Pepper Youngs Family	When A Girl Marries
John's Other Wife	Road To Life	Young Dr Malone
		Young Widder Brown

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By Sherene Fintak

Next Question Please

Q. Can I contribute short book reviews on old time radio and related subjects?

Gerald L. Ruark
3202 Busy Bee Lane
Indianapolis, In. 46227

A. By all means. Such contributions dealing with any phase of old time radio would be most welcome. We can't guarantee publication of every article but everything is held in our files for reference and possible use in future issues.

Q. DEAR ?.....I am always interested to know who I am writing to. Why not identify yourselves so we can be less formal?

David S. Siegel
351 Amherst Avenue
Ticonderoga, NY 12883

A. Our first issue contained an article entitled "All About Us." It covered the personal backgrounds of our staff.

Q. Will RADIO HISTORIAN offer to its subscribers anything different than what other papers have for their subscribers?

Edward J. Carr
629 East Race Street
Stowe, PA. 19464

A. We certainly hope so. But you can judge this best by taking a look at our first two issues. This will give you a good idea of what we are trying to accomplish.

Q. What are the closing lines in the 1938 Lights Out classic "Cat Wife"? Just

before Boris Karloff says "Linda wait..." my transcription skips and I can't make them out.

John Mazurek
388 Urbano Dr.
San Francisco, CA. 94127

A. Unfortunately, our copy is garbled in exactly the same place. We checked another version put out by the Longines Symphonette Society but found the lines had been changed. Possibly one of our readers can help.

Q. How about a free tape contest to members...by drawing?

Dom Parisi
38 Ardmore Place
Buffalo, NY 14213

A. Sorry, being a national publication, a contest of this type would be in direct violation of lottery laws in many states. We'll pass on this one.

Q. Would it be possible for RADIO HISTORIAN to publish the names of individuals who advertise as traders but do not send tapes after they have received the ones they requested?

Several readers

A. This really does get into a rather delicate area. Without knowing all of the facts in any given situation, it might be unfair to publish these names. Sometimes, circumstances beyond the control of the trader causes misunderstandings. We will be happy to accept information regarding questionable practices of individuals and firms. This data would be kept in our files and be made available to readers upon request. Answers to inquiries would be limited to information in our files.

RADIO HISTORIAN

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VOL. 1/NO. 2 SPRING 1975

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ON THE COVER: Charlie McCarthy looks almost dignified in this portrait. It certainly wasn't often that one might find him in such a pensive mood. Come to think of it, possibly his expression was not so much one of dignity as it was surprise just after Fred Allen told him "I'll buy a rubber beanie and use you as a plunger!" Seldom was Charlie really at a loss for words with his wise-crack comebacks. (Drawing by Mary Beth Heup)



a word from our sponsor

There are many excellent old time radio shows currently in circulation. A collector could be kept occupied for quite a few years just dubbing and trading. Those who are just starting out and have a relatively small nucleus of shows can look forward to a fairly long and interesting involvement in the hobby. The advent of good quality home recording equipment puts us in the fortunate (or unfortunate, depending on your point of view) position of being able to trade for additions to our collections without actually giving up anything we already have. This, of course, creates a pyramid type situation whereby it is mathematically possible for every collector to finally end up with all the same shows that everyone else has. Indeed, some may have already reached this point or are very close.

As with most hobbies, the newcomers often rely on the old-timers for help and advice. So it is with OTR, except that eventually these newcomers reach the "end of the line", too! Fortunately OTR seems to be blessed with many established collectors who are ready and willing to help others get started. Without them our hobby would be a very frustrating and difficult one. An "old-timer" with 5000 shows probably has nothing to gain by trading with a newcomer with 50 shows to offer, particularly if all of the 50 shows are already in his collection. Nevertheless he will offer a reel or two and ask for nothing in return. These are the leaders in the OTR hobby. They deserve our respect and appreciation.

Even collectors with small numbers of shows can contribute tremendously to our hobby. They can actively try to locate previously uncirculated material. This can be done by digging through radio station archives, attics or any other place where old transcription might turn up. True, this is not always easy. It may mean contacting and getting to know various individuals who could be helpful. It may involve a lot of "detective" work, but doesn't this make it, in reality, another interesting phase of OTR?

Many of the established collectors have already done this and are always on the lookout for additional uncirculated shows. Actually, all collectors, old or new, should make a sincere effort to do this instead of relying only on the old-timers as their source of material.

Tom Wegner

THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE

By JACK A. MUELLER

The Great Gildersleeve Show was actually what we know today as a "spin-off" of an existing show.

As everyone familiar with old-time radio knows, "The Great Gildersleeve" was one of the most popular of the comedy series on radio in the period 1941-55. There aren't many, though, familiar with how the whole thing started.

Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve started out on the "Fibber McGee & Molly" radio series. Prior to the end of 1939, the character really had no name (just as Harlow Wilcox was referred to as "Harpo" on the old McGee & Co. shows, done in early 1939), and did something different each week. However, it was in December, that "Throcky" appeared on his own as a regular character on the series. Throcky played the role of McGee's next door neighbor, was the manager of Wistful Vista's Bon Ton Department Store, and had interests in other firms around the city.

Gildersleeve was such a popular character, that he became a regular, appearing on each show, and many movies in which Fibber & Molly starred. Due to this popularity, there was serious consideration of having "The Great Gildersleeve" as summer replacement for "Fibber McGee & Molly" in 1941.

Len Levenson wrote the script for the pilot program, which had Gildersleeve

leaving his business in Wistful Vista (The Gildersleeve Girdle Company) to take a two week trip to the town of Summerfield. There, he was to set right an auto agency in the estate of a deceased relative, the proceeds of which were to take care of his niece Marjorie and nephew Leroy.

His stay, however, was destined to become permanent. On the train, he came across a sour old man, and made him the butt of several pranks. Throcky delights in relating the incidents to his niece, nephew, and Birdie, the housekeeper, but, to his dismay, the old gent turns out to be Judge Hooker, who's hearing the petition on the estate.

The judge, taking everything into consideration, orders Gildersleeve to post a \$50,000 bond to insure success of the agency. Gildersleeve suggests that the judge call the head of the Wistful Vista Chamber of Commerce--Fibber McGee--to try to get the bond reduced. After a long talk with Fibber, the bond is changed, this time to \$100,000! So, the girdle factory goes, and Gildersleeve stays in Summerfield.

A recording of this pilot was made, but S.C. Johnson, sponsors of Fibber McGee & Molly, instead went for "Hap Hazard" which starred

Ransom Sherman. However, Kraftco, parent company of Kraft Foods heard of the program's idea, and eventually decided to sponsor it for one regular season. So it was, that in the Fall of 1941, "The Great Gildersleeve" went on NBC radio, Sunday afternoons.

While Gildersleeve appeared on the first "Fibber McGee & Molly" show of the 1941-42 season, and would be referred to in future shows, Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve would never appear in person on a Fibber McGee program thereafter. Fibber, in turn was referred to on "The Great Gildersleeve", but, likewise, never made a full-fledged appearance.

Harold Peary did Gildersleeve on the pilot, and the series itself, leaving in the year 1950 to do "Honest Harold". Then, Willard Waterman (who alternated with Mr. Peary, since their voices were almost identical) took the role, and did it for the duration of the radio version, also doing 39 weeks of 1/2 hour TV for syndication.

■ ■

A SALUTE TO:

Len Lawson of Livermore, California, operator of Len's Lending Library.

Nostalgia, in general, is growing by leaps and bounds. Every day newspaper ads list the names of people interested in buying,

selling, or trading model trains, antiques, radios, anything. Dovetailing perfectly with the pursuit of nostalgia is of course, collecting old radio shows on tape. With so many people taking up the hobby there has been a crying need for someone to help get many of these would-be collectors and traders off the ground. RADIO HISTORIAN has no quarrel with people who sell tapes, but since most of us begin by strictly trading back and forth, its obvious that one has to have material with which to trade.

One of the best places we know of for the beginning collector to obtain such material is Len's Lending Library operated by Len Lawson of 1206 Notre Dame Court, Livermore, Calif. 94550 (with the able assistance of his daughter). Len runs his library on a very simple but highly efficient basis. Here's how it works:

Len asks that the beginner send him a small deposit which is refundable after a total of 30 tapes has been traded. He'll send his catalog from which the subscriber may select 2 tapes at a time. There is a small rental fee for each tape that Len sends out but this charge isn't profit. Len puts it back into the library in the form of tapes, equipment, postage and printing. Periodically, he updates his catalog and sends the supplements to his customers. He also replaces each of his master tapes after 10 trades and offers the used

tapes to his subscribers. This is on a first come first served basis. There is a nominal charge which covers the cost of tapes used for this purpose.

And for all of this top class service all he asks is that the loaned tapes be returned within one week after they are received by the collector.

Recently, Len spent 3 weeks "flat on his back", but the library was kept going by his family. Now that he's back on his feet, the trading is back to its normal efficient status.

There is really no telling exactly how many collectors Len has helped get started, but we're sure the number of satisfied subscribers is large and for this reason, RADIO HISTORIAN salutes Len Lawson and Len's Lending Library for his unparalleled assistance in expanding the OTR hobby.

ON THE MARKET

Low cost recording tape is very popular among old time radio collectors. One of the most common complaints with these "bottom-of-the-line" tapes is poor lubricating qualities in the coating resulting in excessive head wear. This need not be a problem as long as the heads are cleaned and lubricated often. Products are available

for this purpose. Noise reduction capabilities are something less than the higher priced tapes but this is usually of no consequence for OTR shows. Here is our experience with two of the most popular brands:

CONCERTAPE. Available at Radio Shack. Most of our samples provided good copies of shows. Sometimes there is a variation in the appearance of the tape, e.i. glossy coating on one side only, but this does not affect recording capabilities. One of our samples was not cut accurately to the correct width, causing the tape to "wander" out of the guide slots on the recorder. This causes automatic shut-off machines to stop. Since this tape was unuseable, it was exchanged at a Radio Shack without any difficulty. Several other samples had open areas where the magnetic coating did not adhere. Naturally these "bare spots" caused breaks in the program material. Unfortunately, this type of problem is not easily discovered and it is particularly annoying when it is near the end of a show. The only correction is to do it all over again, using a different tape. Another sample apparently ran "off the track" during the coating process, because a close inspection revealed an uncoated area that started from nothing and gradually widened across the full width of the tape. If the wound-up tape appears black in spots, rather than

a constant brown all over, this condition probably exists. The tape should be exchanged.

The price conscious collector will find Concertape to be a fairly good buy as long as he is aware of the possible difficulties he might encounter. The exchange policy at Radio Shack is fair albeit inconvenient, particularly if he had planned on settling down to an evening of recording, only to find that a trip to the store has suddenly become necessary. We have also found that availability is somewhat limited at many Radio Shack stores. If you plan on buying larger quantities in order to obtain the lower price offered, you could have a problem. You might have to place your order and wait a relatively long time. We have never received what could be considered prompt service from Radio Shack.

DAK. Available from Dak Industries, Inc. 10845 Vanowen St. North Hollywood, CA. 91605. Our samples of DAK tape seemed to be of consistent quality. We experienced no mechanical or electronic difficulties. Dak does offer an unconditional money-back guarantee, rather than just a replacement policy, a definite advantage when ordering by mail. Fortunately, we did not find it necessary to return any of the tapes from our samples.

When ordering, be sure to

specify standard output tape. Dak also has a high output type, at higher cost, for more critical recording.

Our tapes reached us exactly twelve days after placing the order, via parcel post. This is good service as far as DAK is concerned. The postal service is another matter. Only about 20% of the tape boxes were undamaged. The apparent rough handling by postal workers caused the relatively heavy reels of tape to break through or cracking the boxes. A suggestion to the manufacturer; possibly some corrugated material inside the packing carton, in addition to the excelsior now used, would "beef-up" things and prevent this damage.

A nice touch is that one can order tapes in the standard DAK boxes or plain white boxes. While this will make no difference in the tapes themselves, if you store your shows on exposed shelves, things will look just a bit neater and uncluttered. All-in-all DAK tape is an excellent buy. A catalog showing the entire line, prices, quantity discounts, etc. is available from the manufacturer.

Cassette recording tip: to prevent losing the first few seconds of a show wind the leader onto the take-up side by inserting a pen into hole and turning manually until recording tape appears in the opening.

Perhaps you are looking for an unusual gift to give to a friend who has expressed an interest in old time radio. How about a subscription to RADIO HISTORIAN? Nostalgia, particularly OTR is growing by leaps and bounds. Wouldn't this be a great way to get more folks interested in our hobby?

Please send a RADIO HISTORIAN subscription to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO RE-LIVE THE DAYS OF: "OLD TIME RADIO"

IN YOUR OWN LIVING ROOM, AGAIN HEAR THE VOICE OF THE SHADOW, THE LONE RANGER, AMOS N' ANDY, BERGEN & MCCARTHY, GUNSMOKE, AND MANY OTHERS. HEAR AL JOLSON AS STAR OF THE SHELL CHATEAU AND MUSIC HALL.

\$1.00 BRINGS YOU THE CATALOG!!!!

SHOWS COST: \$3.50 PER HOUR (REEL TO REEL) TAPE - MINIMUM ORDER 2 HOURS.

CASSETTES - \$5.00 PER HOUR - MINIMUM ORDER 1 HOUR.

I PAY POSTAGE!!!!

**MR. STUART WEISS
136-49 JEWEL AVENUE
FLUSHING, N.Y. 11367**

What Kind of Recorder For Collecting OTR Shows?

With the infinite variety and wide price range, selecting the proper equipment for recording old time radio shows can be a difficult and confusing task.

Tape recorders have come a long way in the last fifteen or twenty years. Even the moderately priced "home" recorders of today are as good or better than some of the studio equipment in use shortly after WWII. This is a clue to a very happy situation for the OTR fan. Not only is the costly, highly sophisticated stereophonic, high-fidelity equipment unnecessary, it may even be undesirable! This will be discussed later but right now let's cover some of the pros and cons with regard to some of the equipment available on today's market.

Cassette or open reel?

The generally accepted format for collecting OTR seems to be 1/4 track, 1800' open reels. At a tape speed of 3.75 ips (inches per second) this provides for six hours of material, one and one-half hours per track. A practical variation is the use of 1200' or 2400' reels for hour long shows such as Lux Radio Theater. The 1200' reel will take four uninterrupted shows, one on each track. The 2400' reel provides for eight one hour shows, two per track. Although an 1800' reel could hold six of these shows, one and one-

half per track, you can see why this would be impossible without splitting some of the shows between two tracks. Some collectors might find this to be undesirable.

There are several advantages in using open reels rather than cassettes. The main one is cost. Using 1/4 track a lot of mileage can be obtained from a single reel. Hi-Fi buffs generally agree the sound quality of open reel recordings is superior to cassettes, but this may not be a problem with OTR shows which were not high-fidelity transcriptions in the first place.

On the other hand, cassettes offer more convenience. You select one show and put it in the machine. No need to search for the show in the middle of the reel. A sixty minute cassette (thirty minutes per side) will, of course hold two 1/2 hour shows. If a stereo recorder is used it is possible to "split" the tracks and get twice the mileage out of the tape. However, this is not recommended because not all cassette machines are capable of playing back this format. As stated above, the sound quality of cassettes is not quite as good as

open reels. This is due partially to the slower speed of the cassette tape. (1.875 ips).

Actually, the choice of open reel vs. cassette must be left up to the individual. This writer happens to use both because each has its place under certain applications. But if a choice had to be made, it would probably have to be open reel. The inconvenience of locating specific shows appears to be about the only disadvantage. This is far outweighed by the advantages stated above, plus the ease of editing and splicing open tape. A broken or jammed cassette usually has to be "written-off".

Another factor that must be considered when selecting a system is whether to use decks, recorders, or a combination of both. A recorder includes pre-amp electronics, amplifier, and speakers. A deck includes only the pre-amp electronics and must be "fed" into an external amplifier and speakers. Recorders generally cost less than the total amount you might pay for separate components, but with the latter you have more flexibility and can practically custom build your own set-up. Also, there is no duplication of equipment. Two decks can be connected to a single amplifier. One is plugged into the appropriate jacks to make it the "master" and the other becomes the "slave unit". Thus you can record from one deck to the other. The same thing can be accomplished using two re-

orders, but you have actually paid for the electronics of two amplifiers when only one is needed. A compromise might be to employ one recorder and one deck. This way you pay for only one amplifier but you have no flexibility. The recorder is always the master unit and the deck must always be the slave.

Choosing a Cassette System.

Assuming you have opted for collecting and trading shows on cassettes, let's consider the possibilities. If cost is of prime importance to you, one of the lower priced portable models is for you. If it is a battery operated type, and this is true of most of them, an A. C. converter/plug accessory is a must. Batteries are OK for playing tapes but should never be used if the machine is to be used for recording. If the batteries are not up to 100% strength (and most of them rarely are) your machine will be running slightly slow. When the tape is played back using new batteries or another A.C. machine the voices will be high-pitched and fast.

Another disadvantage with these low cost portables is the automatic, or fixed input level. You cannot control this level because it was probably pre-set at the factory. Some of the better machines have an automatic level control feature but this is not ideal for radio shows. This is because the systems are designed to provide a

split second reduction whenever a loud sound, such as a gun shot, occurs. The return to normal, however, is gradual in anticipation of the next loud sound. Picture two persons talking quietly, an explosion occurs, and the scene changes to more quiet talk. The first conversation will sound OK. The first instant of the explosion will be distorted with the balance of it OK, and the next conversation will be too soft but gradually increase in volume. The automatic feature is fine for lectures, conferences, and dictation, etc. That's what these machines were really designed for. But recording radio shows is another matter. A more sophisticated cassette recorder with level meters and controls will do a much better job.

Open-reel machines.

If you decide that a reel-to-reel machine is the answer for you, your initial cost will be higher but it is unlikely that you will later become dissatisfied and want to get into something better. You can decide what features you want or do not want. There is a tremendous variety of open reel recorders and decks available. All except a very few of the inexpensive ones have all the features needed for top quality recording of radio shows; level controls, meters, pause switches, etc.

During your shopping expeditions you will find that most open reel decks and recorders are designed

for hi-fidelity stereophonic sound. If you enjoy that sort of thing and buy expensive equipment for that purpose, fine. Radio shows will work out very well on these machines. Salesmen will often stress the wide range of undistorted frequency response. A range of 40-20,000 Hz. is excellent for recordings that were made to be played on such a machine. But remember, this wide response will also include background noise, transmission difficulties and variations not apparent in the original transcriptions. The noises were there but no effort was made to filter them out. After all there was no need to since the playback equipment of those days was not capable of picking them up anyway. You might compare this phenomenon with the steel beams used in a bridge. Years ago the steel might have had flaws in it. But no one really knew. As long as the bridge didn't collapse everything was OK. Today, modern X-ray equipment provides a means of checking before the bridge is built. The result is, of course, safer and better bridges. If a steel company has X-ray equipment but chooses not to use it, isn't that a waste? Likewise, if an OTR buff buys high-fidelity equipment only for radio shows that were not hi-fi in the first place, and then uses filters for removing unwanted noise, isn't that also wasteful?

Summary

If the foregoing hasn't

confused you to the point of giving up OTR, a few thoughts to help you get the most for your money, and get exactly what you want, might be in order. Dubbing old radio shows is a rather unique phase of sound recording. Just as extremely low cost equipment will not be adequate for the job, it is possible to waste money on machines that are really too sophisticated for this type of recording. There is no point in paying a brain surgeon his regular rates to remove a hangnail.

Being more specific:

For a bare minimum your recorders should be A.C. powered (as opposed to batteries) and have input level controls and meters. The choice between cassettes and open-reel is up to you, as is the choice of recorders or decks. Open-reel seems to produce slightly better sound but is a little less convenient. Flexibility is somewhat greater with decks than with recorders but this is more a matter of cost and personal preference. High-priced stereophonic equipment is not really necessary, unless you are buying it for recording and listening to stereo music. In that case it will work out very well for OTR.

GOOD LUCK! One final thought; If you ever consider changes or additions to what might possibly turn out to be a "stable" of machines, used equipment might be the answer. The BUY/SELL/TRADE classified

section in RADIO HISTORIAN might be a logical place to start.

■ ■

ON THE AIR

RADIO HISTORIAN MAGAZINE would like its readers to submit information for this column regarding stations in their areas that are currently broadcasting old time radio shows. We will be happy to list them. Please include city, station call letters, (along with Khz or Mhz numbers), day and time of broadcast. A brief description of the format and whether or not shows are uninterrupted, would be helpful along with any comments about cue-ins etc.

MILWAUKEE, WIS. Sun. 7:30 PM WUWM (FM 89.7) Selected shows each week, plus recorded jazz and swing music from the 30's and 40's. Presented by Jed Dolnick. Uninterrupted after show has started. Cue-in and cue-out excellent.

MILWAUKEE, WIS. Sun. 9:00 PM WZMF (FM 98.3) Lone Ranger, The Shadow, Amos and Andy. Three shows each week. Selected shows from each of these series. Local commercial breaks interrupt shows, sometimes at inappropriate times, cue-in and cue-out is poor with many overlaps and late starts.

Chicago, ILL. Sundays 8:35 PM WGN (AM 720) Selected

half hour show each week. Presented as part of the Floyd Brown Show. Uninterrupted after show has started. Cue-in and cue-out are acceptable.

We have been informed the following stations broadcast OTR. We suggest you check your local newspaper listing for details. We were not provided with information regarding dates and times of broadcast and commercial breaks.

Denver KHOW AM 680

Denver KFML AM 1390

Portsmouth VA WPMH

Wash DC WAMU-FM 88.5

Hershey Pa. WITF-FM 89.5

Arlington Va. WETA-FM 89.5

Baltimore WBJC-FM 91.5

Takoma Park Md WGTS-FM 91.9

New York WRUR-FM 106.7

Syracuse WSYR AM 570

Oswego NY WRVO-FM 89.9

Rochester NY WCMF-FM 96.5

Ithaca NY WHCU-FM 97.3

Kingston Ont Can CKLC-FM

Rome NY WKAL AM&FM 1450 95.9

Madison Wi. WTSO AM 1070

Syracuse NY WCNY-FM 91.3

Salt Lake CY KVER-FM 90.1

Bowling Green Oh. WBGU-FM

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SUPPORTING ACTORS

By Al Meyer

Many of us Old Time Radio collectors have listened to thousands of hours of radio shows. Some we like better than others. Mainly, because the shows had some favorite actors on them. Everyone knows the lead actors on those old shows, but quite often it is the supporting actor that makes the show what it is.

The name "John Brown" may not mean anything to any of you. But, as a supporting actor, that name was magic. John Brown began his career acting in several small parts. He was John Doe on the "Fred Allen Show" and Mr. Simpkins on "Tillie The Toiler". In the 1940's, he came into his prime with such parts as Mr. Lenord on "Amanda Of Honeymoon Hill". Every good actor spent time working the "soap operas". Then there was the role of Thorny on "The Adventures Of Ozzie And Harriet", Mr. Foster on "A Date With Judy" and Mr. Jenkins on "The Beulah Show". On another soap opera he played the part of Jim Barker. That was on "Lorenzo Jones".

John's most famous roles were as Al, Irma's boyfriend on "My Friend Irma" and as Digger O'Dell on "The Life Of Riley". Digger was the "friendly undertaker" and the hit of the show. He was always a favorite of the listeners; a great supporting actor.

THERE'S MORE TO OTR THAN TAPING

There are many phases of Old Time Radio that can and should be actively pursued.

This article could probably be put in the form of another "Help" story because the staff or RADIO HISTORIAN is hoping and trying to start a number of things that are designed to work towards the mutual benefit of all our subscribers.

To start with, let us give you, our readers, a heartfelt thanks for the information we've received about some of the radio stations around the country that broadcast OTR in one form or another. A number of you have written to us with brief explanations of what's being aired, by whom, and when. We'd like to hear from even more of you on this subject, so please send us a short note so that we can make additions to our file of stations that carry OTR.

We've discussed the subject of starting a type of locator service for OTR traders and again, we can use your help. Really, we're not sure it can be done but here's our idea. We would like to get copies of as many logs and catalogs as we can muster so that when one of you is looking for a particular

show we might be able to help in finding it. Out of necessity all catalogs submitted to us must be in alphabetical order. The job of tracking down a specific show will be tough even with alphabetical lists, but trying to pick one out of an unalphabetized catalog would be impossible. We'd like you to contribute your lists as soon as possible and then, after we've done some consolidation, we'll start our locator service after publication of our June issue. Many of us have the same shows on tape so the real beauty of the finder system would probably be in locating the rare episodes.

A number of you suggested a locator system when you sent in your subscriptions so we'll give it a try.

Another thought that some of you mentioned was that of starting a library which would include any book, magazine, or other periodical dealing with OTR or old radios themselves. The staff of RADIO HISTORIAN has already started a small library and we're always on the lookout for more publications. If any of you have suggestions as to where we might

locate some of these books, let us know, or better yet, if any of you would be so kind as to contribute to the library, we'll be much obliged.

The purpose would be to aid in documenting anything of an old radio nature and also as a reference point for locating information about particular shows and particular actors and actresses. Thus, if any of you had questions about OTR or its stars we might be able to answer them for you.

Our pet project, however, would be to encourage the formation of local, regional, or even statewide clubs of OTR collectors. We are already aware of one or two such clubs. The largest and most formidable is North American Radio Archives. It's based in California and thus has a particularly good West Coast background but they are definitely seeking to expand nationwide and are doing an excellent job of it. They, like us, encourage regional club formation and their publication is highly informative and interesting. Indiana has a statewide club of OTR collectors.

We hope that one of the direct results of forming these clubs will be regional conventions, and perhaps, someday, a truly national convention. One of our subscribers from Louis-

ville has informed us of a convention coming up this summer in his home town (see the "On the Schedule" column in this issue). We'll have more specific information about the gathering in our June issue. The RADIO HISTORIAN staff all hope to attend and look forward to meeting as many of you as we can and we'd like to make some new friends too.

This particular convention has plans to cover many phases of nostalgia besides OTR. It will include movies, records, and many other facets of the entertainment media from days gone by.

If any of you have information pertaining to forming clubs, holding conventions or anything else on the OTR subject please let us know. We'll be happy to give you or your club a "plug" in RADIO HISTORIAN. Just sent us the details and we'll put it in print. It's exactly the type of cause we want to further in our pages.

One man, when requesting a subscription to RADIO HISTORIAN wrote:

"Please enroll me in your radio club."

We sincerely hope that all readers understand that RADIO HISTORIAN is not a club but a publication which, we hope, the readers find informative and entertaining.

RADIO through the years

PART TWO.....Radio's potential as an entertainment media was not the driving force in its development. Man had a need to communicate, send messages. He had a NEED TO INFORM.

Man's necessity to communicate with his fellow man grew as the world became smaller thru the discovery of new lands.

The necessity of the military, in particular, to transmit messages quickly and accurately to distant troops led to the development of many communication devices. Fire, smoke, flags, bells, and reflected sunlight had to do the job until wireless communication (radio) took over the task.

Around 1844, Samuel Morse sent the message "What hath God wrought?" from Washington to Baltimore. Demonstrating that messages could be sent great distances over a wire and be received instantaneously, Morse opened the door to the eventual development of radio. 1876 saw the introduction of the telephone by Alexander Bell and voice messages could now be transmitted.

In 1901, Guglielmo Marconi succeeded in sending wireless messages across the Atlantic. Marconi's development was particularly important to ships at sea. The first distress signal from an American ship was received in 1905. Young David Sarnoff, later to become head of RCA, was a wireless operator on Nan-

tucket Island, Mass. in 1912 when he received the news of the Titanic's collision with an iceberg. The efforts of Reginald Fessenden, John Fleming, and Lee DeForest led to radio-telephony and with that, the human voice was finally airborne.

The World War (WWI) found many countries experimenting with radio. Hundreds of transmitters were active in America. The "ham operator" was born. Still it was a message sending medium. The Armed Forces found radio an excellent means to transmit intelligence. A great post-war future was predicted for radio. After the war, more and more receivers were in homes around the country.

Prior to 1920, radio communication for the private citizen was much as it is today for the ham operator. Dr. Frank Conrad, assistant chief engineer for Westinghouse, was a ham operator for many years. The U. S. Signal Corps used Conrad's facilities in his garage in Wilksburg, Pennsylvania during the war for experiments. After the war Conrad began making regular talks over the radio and later played recorded music to fill the idle time. He began to announce, in advance, a ser-

ies of "broadcasts" to his listeners. This was the first use of the term broadcast. When Conrad's supply of records ran out, The Hamilton Music Store in Wilksburg offered him a continuous supply. All he had to do was announce who supplied the records. Thus, Dr. Conrad gave us the first radio advertiser.

In 1920, Westinghouse established KDKA in a little shanty atop the company's nine story factory in East Pittsburgh under the direction of Dr. Conrad. And on November 2, 1920, KDKA went on the air with the first regularly scheduled broadcast: the Harding-Cox election returns. Harding won and his inauguration was also carried to the public over radio. KDKA laid claim to many radio firsts, and this claim could be challenged by other stations. For instance; station KQW in San Jose, California, went on the air in 1909, and ran a regular schedule in 1912. Station 2ZK in New Rochelle, New York, was broadcasting music regularly in 1916. An amateur station 8MK, later to be called WWK in Detroit, was broadcasting regularly more than two months before the Harding broadcast. But, KDKA was the first commercially licensed station according to Department of Commerce records.

The broadcasting of sporting events came early in the life of radio. This stimulated the sales of receivers to the point that manufacturers could hardly

meet the demand. In those early days, broadcasts were made to promote the sale of receivers. Stations were not yet selling air time to other advertisers. Station operators had a hard time maintaining the cost of their stations. It soon became apparent that radio broadcasting could survive and flourish only through sponsored programs. So was born one of the greatest advertising media in the world. One of the first sponsored broadcasts was on August 28, 1922, when a man named H. M. Blackwell advertised apartments in Jackson Heights, New York.

The decade of the 20's saw radio give up its image as being primarily a message sending medium. By the end of the decade we had sponsors, regular programming, networks (NBC-1926, CBS-1929), radios with loudspeakers so a roomful of people could listen in, entertainment, drama, and comedy. We also had critics; by the end of the decade, Lee DeForest, while addressing a convention of broadcasters, cried out: "What have you done to my child (radio)?"

To fill idle time, news and sports events were broadcast. Soon followed comedy and drama, and radio broadcasting as we know it was born.

Next issue...Radio Through The Years...."Broadcasting and Sponsored Shows."

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Radio Bands

Yowsah, yowsah...Ladies and gentlemen, this is Ben Bernie and all the lads. So signaled the start of another Ben Bernie radio broadcast.

The "Ol' Maestro" and "All The Lads" comprised one of the leading bands of the 20's and 30's.

His first big job was at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York in 1922. They played in top spots all over the country. One of their most successful engagements was at the Chicago World's Fair. By 1932, The Pabst Blue Ribbon Show featuring Ben Bernie hit the "top ten" on radio.

Ben was a perfectionist. He insisted on having every note of every number played precisely right. He once explained his fussiness by saying, "If the whole program is good, except the last three seconds, which are bad, then it is all lousy."

The personnel in the band included: Buddy Clark-vocalist, Colonel Manny Prager-vocalist and saxophone, Dick Stabile-vocalist and saxophone, Lou McGarity-trombone, Al Goering-piano, Ward Archer and Gil Graudrums, Mickey Garlock-violin and assistant conductor, and later, Gray Rains-arranger. It was in the late thirties, with the help of the Gray Rains' arrangements, that Ben formed a more modern sounding band.

While Ben was very much in charge while preparing for a broadcast, the band was led by Mickey Garlock. Ben listened from the control room. It was said he walked ten miles preparing each broadcast, dashing from the control room to the stage to issue instructions to the band, then back to the control room to listen. He was a suave character even when giving instructions to his men: "Smooth it out, lads, smooth it out. It's too corny," or, "That was too loud, lads, far too loud. It sounds like a ten-cent dance hall." From the control room, Ben could hear the band as the listeners heard it. "It doesn't matter how the band sounds to me in the studio, it's how it sounds to you on the air."

Seldom seen without a cigar, it was said of Ben that he consumed more than 25 cigars a day. When Ben became excited during a rehearsal, it was then that he would remove the cigar from his mouth and clutching it in his right fist, wave it in the air.

While in real life, Ben and Walter Winchell were close friends, they carried on a feud on radio for many years. Some night

on the late,late show, you may see the two of them together in some old movie from the 30's.

At one time, Ben Bernie's commercial featured a singer out of Nashville, Tenn. She was an unknown and the sponsor didn't like her because she didn't sing loud enough. Ben tried hard to keep her but lost the argument with the sponsor. Later, Eddie Cantor's sponsor liked her and Eddie was credited with discovering Dinah Shore.

Born in Bayonne, New Jersey, on May 30, 1892, Ben Ancelet was one of eleven children of the Village Smithy there. Ben thought he would rather swing a violin bow than his father's sledge hammer. At 14, he played a concert at Carnegie Hall. After some time spent teaching in music school, Ben left for the Loew vaudeville circuit. His first big time engagement with his band came in 1922 in New York. After that, he and the lads appeared in London, Hollywood, Chicago, and almost everywhere else. From big band remotes to his regular radio show for Pabst, Ben Bernie was a solid favorite of listeners.

Ben's opening theme was "It's A Lonesome Old Town" and his signature theme was "Au Revoir, Pleasant Dreams." He would close each broadcast by one-eighth singing and seven-eighths talking the lyrics "Yowsah. Au revoir, a fond cheerio, a bit of a tweet-tweet, God bless you and pleasant dreams."

Yowsah, Yowsah, a term Ben added to our collection of Americanese, was his vocal trademark. Financially well off and always well liked by everyone throughout his career, Ben died in his Beverly Hills home in October, 1943. He was 51.

Deaths of Famous Radio Personalities

JACK BENNY

Jack is survived by his wife, Mary Livingston and daughter Joan. Born on St. Valentine's Day in 1894, Jack was always 39 years old on radio and TV. When Jack Benny died on December 26, 1974, he was 80.

Bert Gordon, "The Mad Russian", died of cancer November 30, 1974 at the City Of Hope Hospital in Duarte, California. He was 76.

Milton Cross, radio voice of the Metropolitan Opera, died of an apparent heart attack on Friday, December 27, 1974. He was 77.

Reed Hadley, radio's "Red Ryder" and later known for TV series "Racket Squad", died Wednesday, December 11, 1974 in Los Angeles. He was 63.

Harry Hershfield of radio's "Can You Top This" died Sunday, December 15, 1974 in New York. He was 89.

BUY - SELL - TRADE

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING RATES

"SWAPPERS" COLUMN IS FREE OF CHARGE AS LONG AS NO SPECIFIC SHOW OR SERIES NAMES ARE USED. SEND INFORMATION AS YOU WANT IT PRINTED, INCLUDING METHOD USED FOR RECORDING, CATALOG AVAILABILITY, ETC.

"WANTED TO BUY", "WANTED TO SELL", "WANTED TO TRADE" ADS WHICH MENTION NAMES OF SHOWS OR SERIES WANTED BY SPECIFIC NAME ARE 10¢ A WORD. FULL NAME AND ADDRESS OF AD PLACER IS COUNTED AS 7 WORDS OR 70¢.

SAME RATE APPLIES TO MISC. ADS, INCLUDING "FOR SALE" ADS FOR SUPPLIES, LOGS, TAPE, SERVICES, OR OTHER EQUIPMENT.

TRADERS ADS-SWAPPERS

When writing copy for any ad please use the following codes for method of recording

Open Reel 1/4 Track - 0/4
Open Reel 1/2 Track - 0/2
Cassette - C
8 Track - 8

WANTED TO BUY

Will buy Bob Hope shows with Kenton band. Need pre 1960 written material on Kenton. Richard L. Partee. 284 Stanford Lane, Jackson, MI 49203

WANTED TO SELL

I am in the process of selling by mail auction (offers invited) over 15,000 old radio 16" transcriptions and air shots. Send 50¢ for lists. Peter G. Leavitt P. O. Box 1187 Gardiner, Me. 04345

SCOTCH, CAPITOL tape at special prices for collectors. Len Lawson, 1206 Notre Dame Court, Livermore, CA 94550

Beginner collectors-Old shows music list sent. 1 hour cassette \$2.00 W. James, 3491 West 7 Vancouver 8 BC Canada

New blank DAK 1800' tape for sale. \$24.00 dz. Includes 4th class postage. Neil Lane, 787 Dodge Trail, Westville, In. 46391

Radio Doctors, Dept. OCIE 201B Eagle Heights, Madison Wisconsin 53705. Broadcast Tapes. Cassettes \$2.50, Reels \$3.00 hour. Catalog \$1.00. Refundable

WANTED TO TRADE

Mystery shows primarily, also, will buy transcriptions of radio programs and big bands. David W. Sher, 103 Marlboro, Avenue, Chattanooga, TN 37411

Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes, I Love A Mystery, Tom Mix, Mandrake, Hop Harrigan. Tom Ralston, P.O.Box DH, Covina, CA 91722

Big Band Remotes and jazz material. Harold Callanan, 22 Boyd ST. Watertown, MA 02172

Complete series of Tom Mix, Orphan Annie, William P. Anthony, 1684 Beryl Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15227

Music: Big Bands, Hit Parade, AFRS. Harvey J. Zitron, 1709 East 34th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11234

Jack Benny, Fred Allen, I Love A Mystery. Edmond K. Drumm, 14 Dale Road, Wethersfield, CT 06109

Gunsmoke, Lux Radio Theatre, Comedy. Ronald R. Dean, 595 East Costilla, Littleton, CO 80122

Cowboy and Country Radio Singers. C. Smith, RR # 1, Box 39 AB, Orleans, MA 02653

Gunsmoke, Have Gun Will Travel, Mysteries, News, and Documentaries. Jim Taylor, 923 Willow Lane, Dundee, IL 60118

Academy Award-Jezebel, 3-30-46; Great McGinty, 4-20-46; Prisoner Of Zenda, 7-12-46; Sunday Afternoon, 8-28-46; Lost Horizon 11-27-46. Lux, Tom Mix, Fred Allen. Herbert S. Carlin, 62 Hilltop Drive, Chappaqua, NY 10514

MISCELLANEOUS

I am looking for a show called "Leave It To Mike" on Mutual around 1945-1946. Mason E. King, 199 Central Street, West Concord, MA 01742

I would like to get "Death Valley Days" with Old Ranger as MC. Bob Hopper, RR Ruskin, B C Canada

Want Mysteries: Sherlock Holmes Shadow, Mollie Mystery Theatre (1943-1945) for research for book on radio mysteries and crime fighters. Patrick Murray 1756 Washtenaw, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

SWAPPERS

Dr P D Kimball, 6741 Highland drive, Salt Lake City, Ut. 84121

Gayle and Sherill Bland 1125 Monitor, Reno, Nv. 89502

Richard Mann, 11821 Monroe Way, Thornton, Co. 80233

Peter T Ternetti, Melvin Road Rock Falls, IL 61071 0/4,C

Maurice Gingras P.O.Box 202 Livermore Falls, ME 04254 0/4

George Bittner 147 Longvue Dr. Pittsburgh, PA 15237 0/4

Robert McKenna 838 E. Linus Milwaukee, Wis. 53207

Lynn Lichty R R 2 Box 8 Antwerp OH 45813

David Joyner P O Box 474 El Dorado AZ 71730

Lewis Crispell 188 Bayard St. Port Ewen NY 12466

W B James 3491 West 7 Vancouver B C Canada

Gino Membrino 28 Morris St. Fitchburg MA 01420

David S Siegel 351 Amherst Ave. Ticonderoga NY 12883

Wayne Gratton 2620 E. Linnwood Ave. Milwaukee WI 53211

Ken Neal Box 911 Washington DC

Walter Hart 9015 N 10th St Phoenix, AZ 85020

Neil R. Lane 787 Dodge Trail Westville IN 46391

Gary Parker 1705 N Nashville Avenue Chicago, IL 60635

Ronald LaPorte 985 Brock apt 302 Windsor Ont Can

Jack Mueller 2524 N 67 Street Wauwatosa WI 53213

Stephen W. Albert 132 Withington Road Newtonville MA 02160

Marvin Mayerhoffer 2525 Hermitage Way, Louisville KY 40222

Richard R Faella 18 Flora St Providence RI 02904 0/R,C

Russ Leslie RR #4 Warkworth
Ont Van KOK3KO

Monte E Wilson 112 Depot/NW
1st St Milton-Freewater OR
97862

Mary Wallace 155 Aberdeen
Terrace Syracuse NY 13206

Tim Belzer 1656 East Adler
Walla Walla WA 99362

John J Farkas 9645 5th Street
Highland Park IN 46322

Raymond E Hubbard 319 East St
Middleton CT 06457

Theodore C Rogers PO Box 1795
Vallejo CA 94590

Frank Barnes 6363 Grover St
#50A Omaha NE 68106 O/4,C

Barbara McGovern 42 York St
Shawsheen Village Andover MA
01810

Norman W. Snyder 1420 Laketon
Rd. Pittsburgh PA 15221

Robert G Flatter 3126 N 12th
Street, Wausau WI 54401

Esteban Moreno MD 102 Park St
Santurce Puerto Rico 00911

Dr C Neil Russell 161 Harvard
Ave Winnipeg MN CAN R3M0JB

Arthur C Zucker 31 Devon Road
Great Neck NY 11023

William C Schommer 15425 Hea-
ther Hill Dr Brookfield WI
53005 O/R,C

M C Emery 8309 5th NE #202
Seattle WA 98115

Don Mitchell 309 Lafayette
Lano Hoffman Estates IL
60172

W B James 3491 West 7 Vancouv-
er B C Canada

Harry Watkins 2168 Greene St
Augusta GA 30904

Sylvia Brunson 302 Lemmon St
Sumter S. C. 29150 O/2

Jim Laidler 16 Boswell St
Belleville Ont Can K8P3K8

Neil Lane, 787 Dodoe Trail
Westville, IN 46391 O/2

Robert N Hoehn, Jr. 7390 Hob-
good Road Fairburn GA 30213

James Yellen 84 Wonham St
Clifton NJ 07013

Charles B Kalan 17614 Lomond
Blvd Shaker Heights OH 44120

Larry L Spalding 8007 Cardi-
nal Drive Tampa FL 33617

James C Potter 1816 S E 165th
Place Portland OR 97233

David Donovan 1704 Terrace Dr
Carroll IO 51401

Edward J Carr 629 East Race St
Stowe PA 19464

David Sher 103 Marlboro Ave
Chattanooga TN 37411

Tom Ralston P. O. Box D H
Covina CA 91722

Harold Callanan 22 Boyd St
Watertown MA 02172

William P Anthony, Jr. 1684
Beryl Drive Pittsburgh PA
15227

Harvey J. Zitron 1709 East
34th St Brooklyn NY 11234

Edmond K Drumm, Jr. 14 Dale
Rd Wethersfield CT 06109

Ronald R Dean 595 East
Costilla Littleton CO
80122

C Smith RR #1 Box 39 AB
Orleans MA 02653

Jim Taylor 923 Willow Lane
Dundee IL 60118

Herbert S Carlin 62 Hilltop
Drive Chappaqua NY 10514

PORTRAIT OF THE PIONEERS

BILLY JONES and ERNIE HARE

"THE HAPPINESS BOYS"

Prohibition was only a year old when they went on the air. Was it a coincidence that their theme song was "HERE'S TO WHISKEY"?

Old time radio enthusiasts and old record collectors easily recognize the names of Jones and Hare. On radio as well as records, Billy Jones and Ernie Hare were familiar names in every household in the twenties and thirties.

Billy Jones, born in 1899, and E.T. (Ernie) Hare, born in 1883, were first heard on October 18, 1921, on WJZ New York. They sang and told jokes for 90 minutes.

On August 23, 1923 The Happiness Candy Co. went on the air with a new type of program. The show featured Jones and Hare as the "Happiness Boys" providing a comparatively small audience with the first real comedy on radio. Utilizing a small studio so that the laughter would be heard on the air, "The Happiness Boys" helped plunge the nation into a new era of radio programming.

In 1932, Jones and Hare, now formerly "The Happiness Boys", became the "Interwoven Pair". The program sponsored by the makers of Interwoven Sox featured the first singing commercial on radio.

"How do you do everybody

how do you do. Gee its great to say hello to all of you. I'm Billy Jones, I'm Ernie Hare. We're the Interwoven Pair. How do you doodle oodle doodle oodle doo."

Some liberty was taken with the words of the song but the name of the tune is "HERE'S TO WHISKEY."

Billy Jones and Ernie Hare will probably always be known as "The Happiness Boys" but during their radio days, depending on who their sponsor was at the time, they were: "The Interwoven Pair", "The Best Food Boys", and "The Tastee Loafers".

When Ernie Hare died on March 9, 1939, Ernie's daughter, Marilyn continued as the Hare of "Jones and Hare." With the death of Billy Jones on November 23, 1940, radio lost "The Happiness Boys."

Veterans of early radio, Billy Jones and Ernie Hare lived to see radio mature in the 18 years they spent in the medium. In retrospect, they lived through more than half of the era we acknowledge as "Old Time Radio." That ain't bad after all.